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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 GEORGETOWN 000112

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TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PINR](#) [PINS](#) [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [KCOR](#) [NS](#) [GY](#)

SUBJECT: SHAHEED "ROGER" KHAN: GUYANA'S OWN ESCOBAR?

REF: A. PARAMARIBO 39

[B](#). 05 GEORGETOWN 1253

[C](#). 05 GEORGETOWN 1122

[D](#). 04 GEORGETOWN 426

[E](#). 04 GEORGETOWN 29

Classified By: Ambassador Roland W. Bullen
for reason 1.4(b) and (d)

[1](#). (S) SUMMARY. Shaheed "Roger" Khan (DOB: 13-Jan-72), Guyana's number one narco-criminal, threatens to exert control over the fragile Guyanese state akin to Pablo Escobar's erstwhile control over Colombia. Khan is presently active in drug trafficking, money laundering, and arms smuggling. His so-called legitimate economic interests include construction and forestry. Vermont has an outstanding warrant for Khan's arrest on weapons charges. END SUMMARY.

Narcotics

[2](#). (S) Khan is believed to be Guyana's leading drug trafficker, more powerful than other established players such as Clay Hutson, Ricardo Rodrigues, and Brahma Nandalall. He established connections with Colombian criminals a few years ago and has since become a major trafficker of cocaine from Colombia. Khan has risen to the top of Guyana's narco-criminal class quickly and ostentatiously. His Colombian associates scolded him in September 2004 for his indiscriminate activities and advised him to get out of the spotlight.

[3](#). (S) DEA developed a plan in 2004 to establish a counternarcotics operation in Guyana. An informant leaked details about the plan. After the leak, Khan threatened to blow up the site of the operation and threatened the lives of Ambassador and the then RSO (Ref D). These threats forced the operation's abandonment.

[4](#). (S) Khan surrounds himself with a coterie of former police tactical squad members for security. He reportedly pays his low-level security personnel USD 1,600 per month -- at least eight times what they previously earned with the police force.

Phantom Squad and Bouterse Connections

[5](#). (C) Khan was a principle in the "Phantom Squad" (aka death squad) that former Minister of Home Affairs Gajraj employed to crack down on crime from 2002 to 2004 (Ref E).

[6](#). (S) Minister of Home Affairs told us Khan regularly travels to Suriname and Trinidad and meets with Desi Bouterse. According to RNAS, Khan and Bouterse met at a hotel in Suriname as recently as December 2005.

Arms Smuggling

[7](#). (S/NF) According to RNAS, Khan has been active in smuggling arms into Guyana from Suriname, French Guyana, and possibly France. He exchanges cocaine for the arms. Khan has also established connections with FARC and has acted as a middleman in cocaine for arms transactions. In such instances, Khan has smuggled guns into Guyana and then exchanged them with the FARC for cocaine. There are strong indications that Khan was deeply involved in a December 2005 shipment of weapons to FARC in Columbia.

Money Laundering and other Economic Interests

[8](#). (S) Khan has a business relationship with Farouk Razac of Swiss House Cambio, a big money laundering operation, to launder his narco-trafficking proceeds. According to RNAS, Khan's drug proceeds have also funded mosques and sent Muslims to study abroad.

[9](#). (U) Khan acquired Kaow Island in the Essequibo River from local entrepreneur and suspected drug dealer Harry Rambarran in February 2005. Once owned by the now bankrupt Willems Timber, Kaow Island has a wharf for ocean going vessels, an airstrip, access to Guyana's bush roads that radiate out from Bartica, and a 136,000-acre timber concession. In September 2005, Rambarran sued Khan for defaulting on a USD 1.1 million

promissory note made in partial payment for the island.

¶10. (C) Khan is reportedly in negotiations with former GUYSSCO Chairman Vic Oditt to purchase a 200 square mile ranch at Pirara in the Southern Rupununi region. The ranch has a large airstrip, and Khan is believed to be acting at the behest of Colombian or Panamanian narco-interests.

¶11. (U) In late 2005 the Guyana Forestry Commission granted a State Forest Exploratory Permit for a large tract of land in Guyana's interior to Aurelius Inc., a company controlled by Khan (Ref C).

¶12. (U) Khan is a director of Classic Development Inc. and Dream Works Developers, both construction concerns. Khan is financing several real estate projects, including a 60-70 unit housing unit development in East Bank Demerara near the new stadium under construction for the 2007 Cricket World Cup.

¶13. (C) Guyanese Bank executives tell us all this is being done without any bank financing.

Run-ins with the Law

¶14. (U) According to LEGATT/Port of Spain, Khan is wanted in Vermont on weapons charges. Vermont has not sought Khan's extradition.

¶15. (U) Khan and two other men, one an active duty policeman, were arrested at a Guyana Defence Force roadblock in December 2002 at Good Hope, East Coast Demerara in a bulletproof vehicle. The vehicle contained sophisticated cell phone intercept equipment, satellite phones, and high-powered weapons. All three were found not guilty of illegal possession of arms and ammunition charges.

¶16. (C) A senior functionary in the Office of the President told us that the communications equipment and weapons were handed back over to Khan. Our interlocutor said the arrest had been "a mistake" because Khan was "working with the police" when the arrest was made.

¶17. (U) According to local newspapers, Khan and a colleague appeared in court January 4, 2006 on charges of "wounding" following an incident in which an individual was assaulted and had a gun placed to his head. Both pled not guilty and were released on GYD 15,000 (USD 75) bail.

Political Influence

¶18. (C) Khan has bought off countless people in Guyana. Through this patronage he is able to operate with impunity. It is believed that GoG is compromised to such an extent that it will not pursue Khan, despite paying lip service to the fight against narco-trafficking.

Comment

¶19. (C) Multiple sources have expressed fears to Ambassador that not only has Khan penetrated almost every level of Guyanese government and society, but that he will exert ever greater influence over the political scene beginning with this year's elections. Most respected commentators believe that Guyana has already become or is well on the way to being a narco-state. If Guyana is a narco-state, then Khan is its leader. Ambassador has spoken with GoG to little avail about Khan's drug activities and unaccounted wealth. The GoG has adopted a head-in-the-sand approach to Khan and narco-trafficking in general. The GoG asks for hard evidence and pretends not to know how Khan acquires his means. END COMMENT.
BULLEN